MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

FINAL EXAMINATION

T2, 2017/2018

BOB7024 – ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

(MBA Full Time)

1 FEBRUARY 2018
9.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.
(3 Hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS:

1. This question paper consists of **TWO (2) SECTIONS** and 6 pages (inclusive of the cover page).

2. **SECTION A** contains a case study with 5 questions (worth 40 marks). **Answer ALL questions.**

3. **SECTION B** contains 3 essay questions (worth 60 marks). **Answer ALL questions.** The distribution of the marks for each question is given. Write your answers in the **Answer Booklet** provided.

SECTION A: CASE STUDY (40 MARKS)
ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Jack Ma Yun, founder and executive chairman of Alibaba Group, has been lauded for his successful e-commerce enterprise that overtook Walmart as the largest retailer in gross volume (Gross volume refers to the total value of all products sold via online platforms, calculated by commission). Beyond the economic success, Jack Ma is an exemplary figure that embodies the persona of a responsive and responsible leader. On top of creating a differentiating business model and entrepreneurial experiences, Ma is known for an extraordinary personality in both his leadership style and his beliefs. Since he learnt about the Internet in 1995, he aspired to connect Chinese businesses with the rest of the world. After establishing Alibaba in 1999, Ma's e-commerce business (Taobao.com) performed so well that eBay withdrew from the China market in 2006.

What are some of the takeaways from Ma?

"Today, making money is very simple. But making sustainable money while being responsible to the society and improving the world is very difficult."

In a phone interview in 2013, Ma seeks to address environmental issues like water, air, and food safety in China. He also hopes to make positive changes in information-driven industries like finance, education and healthcare to strengthen the Chinese society. His passion to help people and the society is reflected in Alibaba's policies: they offer stock options to employees and are concerned about improving the lives of employees who grow with the company. When it comes to his wealth, Ma disagreed with the title of "being a rich person".

"When you have one million dollars, that is your money. When you have 20 million dollars, you start to have problems (inflation, investment concerns). When you have one billion dollars, that is not your money. That is the trust that society gives to you; they believe that you can manage the money."

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Since the conception of his business, Ma has helped the younger generation. Before the booming growth of Alibaba, he was distributing equity to the high school students who worked for him. This inclusive growth mindset followed him as Alibaba grew into an e-commerce giant. He constantly thought about what he can do for the future generation, as he enriched the culture and education of the young ones. "I do not want people to have deep pockets but shallow minds," he said in a phone interview in 2013. In his interview with United States President Barack Obama in 2015, Ma revealed that Alibaba has reserved 0.3% of the company's total revenue for the younger generation to spend on addressing environmental issues. This plan has been running for almost seven years since 2010.

"I would say in the past 70 years we are the leader of anti-piracy (counterfeit goods)," he commented. "Last year alone, we have put 400 people in jail, we deleted 370 million product listings." To prevent further occurrences, Ma explained that they could trace the origins of the fake products from their database, and deliver the information to the police for crackdowns. He recognises that fighting counterfeit products is a war against greed. It is not an easy fight that we should not stop. Furthermore, Alibaba leverages on big data – and recently – artificial intelligence to differentiate credible business owners from less credible ones through a credit rating system tied to each individual seller. The system he calls "Sesame Rating System" can process fast and secure loans.

When interviewed, Ma recognises that he is no stranger to failure. "If you don't give up, you still have a chance. Giving up is the greatest failure," he said. His business model may have helped to differentiate Alibaba, but his tenacity played a huge role in driving his success. "They call me 'Crazy Jack.' I hope to stay crazy for the next 30 years," because having crazy ideas that are out of the box, allows him to see differently.

In a 2015 article by the *World Economic Forum*, Harvard Business School professor Bill George has also described Ma as someone who "embodies the global intelligence that is needed for today's global leaders". Someone who is high on global intelligences will be

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able to adapt to diversity at a global level, perform cross-border assignments that require understanding and collaboration with different activities across the region. The global intelligence consists of seven elements: adaptability, awareness, curiosity, empathy, alignment, collaboration and integration.

Besides his affable personality and tenacious attitude towards his life journey, Ma is probably one of the most enlightened entrepreneurs to date for thinking beyond the tangible gains of his business imperatives. His embodiment of the responsive and responsible leadership is indeed inspiring.

Source: Yizhen Lu (2017), 5 Leadership Lessons From Jack Ma, *Leaderonomics.com. Https://leaderonomics.com/business/5-leadership-lessons-from-jack-ma*

Required:

1) Do you agree Jack Ma is a transformational leader? Why? Justify your answer. (16 marks)

2) There are five traits in Big Five Personality Model. Based on the above article, identify and discuss the LEAST demonstrated dimension of Jack Ma in this model. (5 marks)

3) "Last year alone, we have put 400 people in jail, we deleted 370 million product listings". Discuss this statement from the perspective of ethical leadership. (5 marks)

4) Explain Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory. Discuss how the employees of Jack Ma get motivated from the view of expectancy theory. (10 marks)

5) In your opinion, what are the possible challenges that may face by Jack Ma in expanding his business worldwide? Explain your answer. (4 marks)

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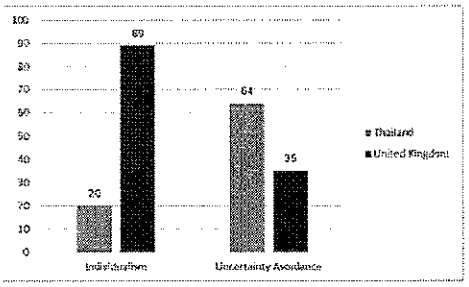
SECTION B: ESSAY QUESTIONS (60 MARKS)

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

a) Based on the Hofstede's value chart below, discuss how values differ across culture in Thailand and United Kingdom. (12 marks)



b) Shortcuts for judging others often allow us to make accurate perceptions rapidly and provide valid data for making decisions. However, they can and do sometimes result in significant distortions. Discuss four of the shortcuts that could bring distortions. (8 marks)

QUESTION 2

a) You are responsible for convening a major event in which senior marketing executives from several branches will try to come to an agreement on marketing issues. It is well known that some executives take positions to make themselves appear superior, whereas others are highly motivated to solve the problems.

i. What team decision-making problems are likely to be apparent in this event? (6 marks)

ii. What actions can you take to minimize these problems? (4 marks)

b) Research indicates that employees rely on corporate grapevine as it transmits information very rapidly in all directions throughout the organisation. However, it distorts information by deleting fine details and exaggerating key points of the story.

i. What is grapevine? (2 marks)

ii. What are the benefits of grapevine? (4 marks)

iii. What should manager do to deal with grapevine? (4 marks)

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QUESTION 3

a) Reducing the size of the workforce has an immediately positive outcome in the form of lower wage costs, and companies downsizing to improve strategic focus often see positive effects on stock prices after the announcement. However, among companies that only cut employees but do not restructure, profits and stock price usually decline. Part of the problem is the effect of downsizing on employee attitude. The result cause company to be more anemic than lean.

i. In your opinion, explain why the remaining employee's attitude in the company is the main problem of downsizing. (4 marks)

ii. Discuss four effective strategies in reducing the negative impacts of downsizing. (8 marks)

b) Workplace spirituality recognizes that people have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work in the context of community. Briefly explain four cultural characteristics that are associated with spiritual organisations. (8 marks)

End of Paper